Chapter - III

PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESES

The results of the studies reviewed in Chapters I and II undoubtedly create a confusion regarding the superiority of the methods of practice. Some studies support the whole method, while other few studies favour the part method and other few state that there is no advantage of either whole or part method. Spaced and Massed methods of practice also met the same fate and yield contradictions.

There is one more domain of research studies, which yield strong evidence in support of the total time hypothesis (Hovland 1938a, 1938b, Melton and Stone 1942, Bhaskar and Muhar 1972, Pradeep and Yadav 1985). Thus, the total amount of time required to learn a fixed amount of material remains the same irrespective of the method of practice. Results of the studies, where paired associate learning or free recall learning were used, supported the total time hypothesis. Undoubtedly on the other hand evidence supporting this hypothesis in serial learning studies is less impressive. However, Keppel and Rohula (1965) who used serial learning reported affirmative results. In addition to it, there is one more
area where the confusion still prevails. Conflicting results have been reported when less meaningful material is used (Braun and Heyman 1958, Muhar and Shrivastva 1971, Pradeep and Yadava 1985) to investigate whether the total time hypothesis holds true or not for material of varying degree of meaningfulness.

Dhaliwal, Varinder in 1987 revealed that age level emerged to be significant determiner of learning and memory. However Sex was not found to be a significant determiner.

Although, so far a number of studies have been conducted to test the total time hypothesis, but the present investigator feels that enough work has not been done in this area specifically the variable of different age levels has not been given proper attention. Realising the importance of this variable in the area of learning, the investigator designed a study for testing the tenability of the total time Hypothesis for meaningful and nonsense syllables with the attendable variation in the age.

The problem for the present investigation was formulated as follows :-

To verify the Total Time Hypothesis, among children and adults for two kinds of material (meaningful
and nonsense syllables) by following massed-Spaced and whole-part methods of learning.

It was hypothesised that:

(1) Adults/Children would learn a fixed amount of meaningful material in a fixed amount of time regardless of the method of practice used.

(2) Since the Total-Time Hypothesis does not hold true for non-meaningful material, adults/children would learn more non-sense material by the part and spaced methods of practice then by the massed or whole method.

(3) Level of age would be a significant determinant of learning provided all other variables are controlled.

We may now pass on to the next chapter dealing with the design and methodology of the present investigation.